

On the other hand, are you sure that Mr. Bentham, if examining all the species named above, would maintain them all with the rank of species? Possibly, yes; but you can assert nothing, and therefore you can not attribute such names as *Triodia Texana* to him. \* \* \*

As matters now are we must quote *Triodia Texana* Vasey in "The Grasses," etc., etc. The botanist who seeks this name in your book finds the indication "*Tricuspis Texana* Thurb.," and low he is at a loss where to find more information about that species. The author of *Triodia mutica* is F. L. Scrib. in Bull. Torr. Bot. Club X, p. 30. He is also the author of *Hilaria rigida* (in Bull. Torr. Bot. Club IX, p. 86), not Bentham, who, in Notes on Gram., p. 62, mentions only *H. cenchroides*, *H. Jamesii*, *H. mutica*, *H. sericea*, as congeners.

It is true that it is no merit to change a name if another has given the reasons for changing it, but the quotation of any name of author behind a combination of names expresses or proposes no acknowledgment of merit at all, but serves only to guide the botanist in his search for information about the species. This is the principle recognized by most European botanists, and it implies the other principle that the quotation of the book where to find information is more important than that of the author of the name.

#### Concerning nomenclature.

I was much surprised when I read in the BOTANICAL GAZETTE (June, 1888, p. 161): "Shall the law of priority apply only to the combined generic and specific name, or to the specific appellation as well?"

If I understand it means a doubt as regards the fixity of a specific name when a species is transferred to another genus.

This point has been clearly considered and settled in the 57th article of our *Laws of Nomenclature*, recommended by the Botanical Congress held at Paris in August, 1867<sup>1</sup>:

"When a species is moved into another genus the specific name is maintained, unless there arises one of the obstacles mentioned in the articles 62 and 63." (If the name exists already in the genus or could lead to some misconception.)

This rule is in conformity with the general principle not to change names without absolute necessity. It has also an advantage, which is to help remembering a species formerly in another genus.

We follow that rule in several cases more or less analogous to our scientific nomenclature. When Mexican cities have been transferred to the United States their names were not changed; when the name of a city is changed, those of the streets are kept; and if *John Brown* discovers that his real family name is *Smith*, he would be *John Smith*.

Allow me to recall that our *rules* were first submitted to a committee of eminent botanists of five different nationalities, afterward discussed in three sittings by more than a hundred members, and finally adopted by universal consent. Since that time I never heard any objection to the fixity of specific names, and if new names are given that are not necessary I would consider them as null.

Geneva, Switzerland.

ALPH. DE CANDOLLE.

#### Polygamous flowers in the watermelon.

One of the characters given for Cucurbitaceæ is "flowers monœcious or diœcious." In making some crosses to-day on the Volga watermelon,

<sup>1</sup>Translated in English. Reeves & Co., London. 1868.